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The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The Ethics of Gift Giving and Receiving.

The story of the woman with the alabaster cruse is one of the most familiar and beautiful stories in the Gospels.* It belongs to the closing scenes of the Master's life, and we need to bear this in mind if we would realise the true inwardness and significance of it. His enemies in Jerusalem had taken counsel against him, and only waited a fit opportunity for carrying out their fell designs. With some knowledge of this, and with a foreboding amounting almost to certainty of the doom which threatened him, he withdrew with his disciples to Bethany—sad at heart, doubtless, but calm and resolute. Bethany was a little village that lay about two miles to the east of Jerusalem; and it was dear to Jesus as the home of his friends, Lazarus, and Martha and Mary. He seemed at Bethany to breathe an atmosphere of affection and sympathy, and these he never needed more than now. Whilst there he and his disciples were invited to the house of "Simon the Leper;" and it was here, during the meal, that the incident took place to which I ask your attention now for the sake of the light it throws on the ethics of gift giving and receiving. The story is told in the briefest possible manner. As Simon and his guests are reclining at their meal, a woman enters the apartment, and, going up to Jesus, pours very precious ointment on his head from an alabaster cruse. The disciples rebuke her for what they consider her wastefulness, telling her that the ointment might have been sold for the benefit of the poor. But Jesus takes her part; he declares that she has done a beautiful deed, and, in view of what is going to happen to him, a most appropriate one.

Such is the story. Of the woman we know nothing further, not even her name. Tradition has, indeed, identified her with Mary Magdalene, but on no sufficient grounds; and we are left to conjecture her history and the manner in which she was brought under the influence of Jesus. She may, like the Magdalene, have been one out of whose heart he had cast the "demons" of vanity, malice, and selfish unrest, and in whose nature he had awakened and strengthened the higher and nobler feelings; or, like Mary of Bethany, she may have been one of quiet and gentle spirit, who had all her days chosen the better part, and for whom it had been blessedness itself to sit listening at the Master's feet. Whoever she was, and whatever her character and history, we know at least that she entered the guest room with her heart full of love and reverence for Jesus; and we can realise what a deep joy it was to her to show him her affection

*Matt. xxvi., 6—13.

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and gratitude in the way she did. No one who understood her feelings and those of the Master at the time, could fail to see how beautifully fitting was her act; and it was through lack of sympathy that the disciples interfered with their rebuke. Yet let us not be unfair to the disciples. They had been taught by Jesus to consider the poor. They knew that the poor lay very near to their Master's heart; and in pleading for the poor on this occasion they doubtless believed they were actuated by his spirit, and felt sure of his approval. Had they not heard him say severe things of those who accepted honours and entertainments for themselves, and had no compassion on the homeless and starving multitude? They may have looked to the Master himself to rebuke the woman. They may have expected him to turn to her and say: "This is very kind of you, but the expression of your affection and gratitude might and ought to have taken a form less expensive." Had he said so, the woman would have gone away reproaching herself for having done a very foolish thing. But he did not say it; and why not? Was he at that moment less considerate of the poor than he had always been before? And if he was still the friend of the poor, ever anxious to minister to their needs, why did he not join the disciples in remonstrating with the woman? Some, I daresay, would reply that he refrained out of consideration for the woman's feelings. And there is doubtless a good deal of truth in this. We know from many evidences that he had a chivalrous regard, a true man's tenderness, for the feelings of women, and would not, if he could help it, cause them the least offence. But this is not the whole truth, and it would not, of itself, justify him in the position he took up as against that of the disciples. He would have been the last to say that a man's conduct, even on such an occasion as the one we are considering, should be guided solely by reference to the feelings of others. If his teaching emphasised one thing more than another it was that men should act always and everywhere in accordance with what they knew to be right, whether such action were agreeable or not to their friends and others who wished to show them kindness. That was the plain teaching of Jesus; *and we must take it as the standard by which he himself would wish to be judged.*

Can we, then, justify his approval of the woman's act on any other consideration than that of regard for her feelings? Was there any principle, broad-based on the will of God, and on the necessities of human nature, by which it was right for him to accept the gift? This is a very important and far-reaching question; for it concerns not only the special case we are considering, but the whole matter of gift giving and receiving, and it is as urgent to-day as it was in the days of Jesus. We have all received gifts more or less "precious," and shall doubtless receive others; yet the poor are always with us, poor with a poverty unknown in Judæa or Galilee, and we may therefore fitly ask: How *can* we accept rich gifts for ourselves, when there is so much destitution around us? Would it not be right to refuse, telling our friends to give to the poor instead? Well, let us consider the case of Jesus in the story first.

The incident, as I have said, belongs to the closing scenes of his life. His enemies in their hate have decided upon his death; cold and cruel the world seems to him; there are none who fully understand him; and it was just as he was feeling most keenly his loneliness and need of sympathy that this woman came upon the scene, and out of love and reverence anointed him with the precious ointment. Ah! sweet as bread to a man dying of hunger was the fragrance of that ointment to him in his great hunger for affection, and we can understand why he turned to the disciples and said, "She hath done a beautiful deed." She had refreshed and strengthened him to finish the work which God had given him to do. She had prepared him for the death he was to die.

The whole truth, then, is that humanity has other needs besides those of physical hunger and thirst. We go among the poor, and we find that many of the poorest of them are sustained and cheered by the love of kindred and neighbours; or we go among the rich, and we find that many of the richest of them are consumed with a fierce hunger of the heart—a yearning for human sympathy. Jesus, as he reclined at Simon's table, had bread enough and to spare; but what soul in all Judæa was at that moment more needy than he? Love is the greatest thing, and the want of it the greatest want; and so, if

by any means we can show love to those who need it, let us do it, not counting the cost too carefully.

The poor are always with us; but the need of food, and clothing, and shelter, great and urgent as in many cases that need may be, is not the only requirement of the humanity we share. The heart has its yearnings, the soul its aspirations; and it is a right and gracious thing to satisfy these. In this lies the justification, not only of the gifts which friend makes to friend, but also the justification of all beautiful works of art, of all noble music and architecture. Yet there have been, amongst social reformers and disciples of Jesus, many who, in the name of the poor, have protested against the expenditure of money on these things. When the great cathedrals of Christendom were being built there were doubtless people who had indignation among themselves and said: "To what purpose is this waste? The money might have been given to the poor." But weary and heavy laden humanity has, generation after generation, blessed the builders for what they gave. They, too, wrought a beautiful work, and this is spoken of throughout the world as a memorial of them.

J. M. CONNELL.

Travel Impressions.

BY THE EDITOR.

VI.

RELIGION IN AMERICA.

I suppose the ordinary Englishman's first impression of Religion in the United States is that it is rather far to seek. The churches of the great American cities are not the prominent features of interest that they are in European cities. There are no ancient cathedrals with all their æsthetic charm and historical associations to be visited. It is no fault of New York that it has no Westminster Abbey, nor of Chicago that it has no Notre Dame. But their modern churches are not impressive from an architectural point of view, and by the Americans themselves are scarcely considered as objects of public interest. On reaching Chicago I purchased a local guide, which gave a list of public buildings deserving attention. The list included Banks, Art Galleries, City Hall, Railway Stations, huge Stores, Theatres, Music Halls, Exchanges, thirty-story Buildings, mammoth Elevators, Libraries, Clubs, Schools, Colleges, etc.; but —no Churches. In the opinion of the publishers churches did not count among the things to be seen in Chicago, and this experience was repeated at Buffalo and St. Louis. In each of these cities churches abounded in quite as large a proportion to the population as in England, but architecturally they were evidently regarded as a negligable quantity.

Of course, the outward and visible signs of religion manifest in church buildings are no true measure of the faith and piety of a people. A more serious symptom may be found in the kind of Sunday which obtains in all the large cities. It is continental, with a vigour and a difference. Works, factories, and ordinary shops are closed, but the public-houses ("saloons") are open all day long, and theatres, music-halls, places of entertainment, and restaurants are in full swing. All the newspapers come out with Sunday editions, which include coloured and comic supplements, often of a very vulgar type. Base-ball matches are played on Sunday afternoon, the railway stations are crowded, and it appears as if the whole population were on pleasure bent. It would seem that the reaction from the Puritan Sunday had carried the people as much to the other extreme. The chief reason, however, is the large foreign element, outnumbering in some cases the native-born American by four to one. Greater New York has a population of four millions, and of these more than three millions are foreigners. There are more Germans in New York than in Berlin, more Italians than in Rome, more Poles than in Warsaw, more Irish than in Dublin. It is this foreign element crowding the cities which is mainly responsible for a lurid and noisy Sunday.

Happily there is behind these things a quiet, steady, solid mass of life and opinion which has it roots deep in religion. The church buildings may not be much, but the congregations are large and numerous, preaching reaches a high level of ability, church workers are zealous and active, and gifts are sometimes astonishingly generous. The churches seemed to me to have a greater hold upon the people as a whole—I refer to the English stock—than is the case with

us. Indifferentism is not so prevalent, and the wave of Agnosticism, which a quarter of a century ago wrought such havoc with English churches, does not appear to have largely affected American thought.

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The absence of an Established Church, with all it implies of privilege, patronage, denominational bitterness, and airs of condescension, comes upon the English visitor with something of surprise. Of course, he knew the fact beforehand, but one must stay in America a little while to realise its full significance. The Englishman expects to find that the Episcopalian Church, while not the State Church, has pretty much the same prestige, social status and power as at home. He soon discovers that it is not so. Churches and ministers of all the great denominations are on a footing of perfect equality. The esteem in which they are held depends on their good work and their personal worth. The Episcopalian rector counts for no more than the Baptist minister, and while a few High Churchmen go on making exclusive claim for themselves and their office as representing the only true Church of God in America, the majority of churchmen, both clerical and lay, quietly laugh at that assumption, and are content to follow the lead of Bishop Philip Brookes, who said that to call the Episcopal *the* American Church was an impertinence, but that the American Church is the whole body of Christian people of all denominations.

In the absence of State support all churches are thrown back on the voluntary principle. The results are both astonishing and gratifying. The provision of places for public worship quite equals that of England, in proportion to the population. The churches may not be very substantial or picturesque, in fact the country churches are mostly of wood, with a belfry for the only adornment, but the living work is supported with a generosity of which Englishmen know little. This is especially true of our own group of Liberal Churches. Boston, the Mecca of American Unitarianism, has twenty-five churches, and the Parish Church in most New England towns and villages is Unitarian. Some indeed are suffering, as in England, by the removal of the young and energetic to the large cities, but generally they are in a healthy condition, and full of hope for the future. Optimism is the characteristic temper of the American. He has absolute confidence in the future of his country. Nothing daunts him. There may be times of depression, public life may be more or less corrupt, Tammany may gain temporary victories, but all will come out right at last. The churches catch the same note. I asked one of the most prominent of the younger ministers, "How goes the good cause?" and he answered, "We have the ball at our feet." I put the same question to one of the veterans, and he said, "All is well." Satisfactory balance-sheets are by no means the highest gauge of success, yet they mean something. Two of these churches contribute each £1600 a year to the funds of the American Unitarian Association, while raising the same amount for their own ministry; and it may be doubted whether these particular churches are wealthier than some we have at home. The scale of giving is much larger than with us, while the average ministerial stipend is as much again. It is true living costs more, and Americans earn more, than we in England, but it is also true that they give more freely. Nothing is more remarkable than their lavish gifts to Universities. Never a year passes but Harvard receives £100,000 in benefactions, while this year they amount to three-quarters of a million—pounds, not dollars.

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Two delightful Sundays stand out prominently from the rest, one at New York and one at Boston. At New York the service was conducted by the Senior Minister (Dr. Robert Collyer), the sight of whose grand massive head with its silver locks was itself a benediction. He had lately suffered a great bereavement, and the prayer was such a tender, childlike, pathetic utterance, that people rose from their knees with tears on their face. The sermon was preached by the Co-Pastor (Dr. Minot Savage), and consisted of a *resumé* of the various doctrines associated from time to time with the Lord's Supper Service. It was an intellectual *tour de force*, lasting fifty minutes, and delivered without a note. This was followed by the admission of new members to the church. A dozen or more men and women, some young and some grey-headed, came up to the table-pew, and after a short address by Dr. Savage, repeated a short

vow of consecration, and were given the right hand of fellowship. Then came the Communion Service, conducted by Dr. Collyer, to which a large number of the congregation remained. Altogether a most impressive service.

At Boston, or rather at Cambridge, under the shadow of Harvard University, we had the joy of listening to Dr. Crothers, whose visit to London two years ago will not soon be forgotten. In the gallery were some 200 students from the University, while below gathered some of its most distinguished professors with its principal, Dr. Elliot—a trying but an inspiring audience. Dr. Crothers is evidently the preacher for that unique position. A man of the highest culture, yet of the simplest disposition and the most unassuming manners; a man of a profoundly spiritual temper yet of a kindly humour, which now and then, especially in his *Atlantic Monthly* essays, has a combined flavour of Charles Lamb and Oliver Wendell Holmes, he wins the confidence and affection of young and old alike, and exercises an influence on the thoughts and hearts of men which is felt far and wide. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" was the text on which we had a most delightful *talk*, designed to greaten and uplift the heart burdened with the presence of temptation and difficulty. An occasion never to be forgotten. J. W.

Cremation and the Birmingham Crematorium.

I.

Cremation, as a means of disposing of the remains of the dead, is now receiving in this country general and wide-spread attention, in view of the well-ascertained dangers to the living, especially in large towns and thickly-populated districts, where the perils of the spread of disease consequent upon earth burial are the greatest. This is a danger which has been recognised by the closing of churchyards and other burial grounds, and has become accentuated again and again as the large centres of population have spread around the more closely packed cemeteries which have been established in the suburbs. Another serious consideration is the increasing amount of land which is becoming devoted to the present system, and which, though absorbed in small quantities throughout England, forms in the aggregate a large area, which is thus permanently withdrawn from cultivation.

It is not intended here to urge the claims and advantages of cremation, but rather to say something of its historical aspect and modern development, as shown by the spirit of enquiry that is abroad, and the changed and changing views of the public on the subject, and also the action which is being taken by those who are already convinced of its value to enable others to adopt it, without having to encounter the difficulties and cost hitherto met with in carrying out the wishes of the deceased.

It may be interesting, at the outset, to note that this is another instance of the truth of the old saying, "There is nothing new under the sun," for the adoption of cremation is merely reverting to the common practice of the ancients.

Incineration was the custom in India from the earliest ages, thence it reached Europe. In old tombs, urns containing human remains have been found in Malta. In Greece it was the common custom, and "it must have been fairly popular in Rome for some considerable period before B.C. 450, as in that year the law of the Twelve Tables was promulgated, under which regulations were made both in regard to cremation and also interment, simplifying the procedure. In B.C. 44, being the year after he was made Dictator, Julius Cæsar was murdered. A description of his funeral is given in the play, as follows:—

'We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.'"

At the commencement of the Christian Era it was almost universal, but by the early part of the fourth century it had fallen into disuse, owing to a large extent to its having been considered repugnant to the views of the Resurrection then held in Europe.

The modern reaction in favour of cremation took place on the Continent before it reached England. As early as 1866 the method was advocated in Italy. The results of experiments by certain Italians were published in 1872, and one year later Professor Brunnetti, of Padua, exhibited a model of his furnace at Vienna, and also the ashes resulting from the cremations he had carried out, thus putting the matter before the world in a practical form.

But there does not seem to have been any further similar movement on the Continent at this time.

The introduction into England was due, in the first instance, to the eminent English surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, who became convinced that "cremation was by theory the quickest and safest mode of reducing the dead body to its original elements, the end of which was obtained slowly, and not without danger to the living, by burial in earth." The subject was first brought before the British public by means of an article written by him in the *Contemporary Review* in January, 1874, and this was followed by experimental cremations he made about the same time on animals in London and Birmingham, which afforded ample evidence of the superiority of complete cremation over earth burial.

Early in the same year a few persons associated themselves together, and founded a society with a view to advocating cremation. Amongst the list of these were Shirley Brooks, Ernest Hart, the Rev. H. R. Haweis, F. Lehmann, W. Shaen, Sir Henry Thompson, the Rev. Charles Voysey, Sir T. Spencer Wells, and subsequently, soon afterwards, the Rev. Brooke Lambert, Lord Bramwell, Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.P., Dr. Farquharson, Sir Douglas Galton, Lord Playfair, Mr. Edmund Yates, Mr. J. C. Swinburne Hanham (hon. sec.), the Duke of Westminster, Sir Arthur Arnold, and others.

The society was called "The Cremation Society of England," and it has ever since its formation exercised a powerful influence in forwarding the objects for which it came into existence. Sir Henry Thompson was elected president, an office which he happily retains to the present time.

The society was organised with the view of obtaining and spreading information on the subject, and of carrying out the process in the best way possible, provided that the practice was not illegal. The first step was to ascertain clearly how matters stood in this respect, and having obtained an opinion from two eminent counsel that cremation of the human body was not illegal, in the absence of any nuisance resulting, the promoters arranged with the managers of a large cemetery near London for the erection of a crematorium on their property, but this idea had to be abandoned in consequence of the strenuous opposition of the then Bishop of Rochester, which was successful owing to the fact that the cemetery lay within his jurisdiction.

A site was subsequently found at Woking, and there, in 1878, on an acre of land which was purchased, a furnace designed by Professor Gorini, of Italy, was erected. When finished the apparatus was tested by the Professor, who cremated the body of a horse, producing the results which many cremations of the human body have since confirmed, that complete combustion can be effected in from two to three hours, and in so satisfactory a manner that no smoke or effluvia escapes from the chimney. This result, however, can only be obtained if the furnace is properly managed, and the conditions laid down by the authorities of the crematoria with regard to the coffin and other matters are observed.

A considerable time had to elapse before cremation could be carried out. The Home Office proved obstructive, and as the result of a conference between the Home Secretary and members of the Cremation Society it was deemed advisable to undertake that no cremation should take place without the previous permission of the Minister. This caused a delay of several years in making use of the building at Woking, and limited the operations of the society, for the time, to advocating the cause and spreading information on the subject.

During this time progress was being made on the Continent. In September, 1877, the first cremation at Milan took place in a Gorini furnace before referred to. A handsome building had been erected containing two such furnaces. The number of bodies which were burned there up to the end of 1886 was 463, since which up to June, 1899, 892 more bodies were cremated, making a total of 1355. Soon afterwards smaller crematoria were erected, and much used in other towns in Italy, at Lodi, Cremona, Brescia, Bologna, Varese, Padua, Venice, and also at Rome, where 800 cremations have taken place.

Returning to operations in this country. In 1882 the Cremation Society were requested to undertake the cremation of two deceased persons, whose bodies had been kept in a tomb on a private estate, but they were unable to do so owing to the same objections being raised as those of the Home Secretary three years previously. Under these circumstances the family of the deceased erected a crematorium on the estate, and carried out their desire with complete success. This was fully mentioned in the newspapers, and was commented on, but the Government did not notice it, and no proceedings were taken. In the following year,

however, legal action was commenced in the case of the cremation of the body of a child in Wales, which was carried out by the father in defiance of the Coroner's authority. This case came before Mr. Justice Stephen, who delivered the most important judgment "that cremation is a legal proceeding, provided no nuisance be caused thereby to others."

Thus a great principle was established, and one which freed the hands of the Cremation Society, who thereupon offered to use their crematorium for those who desired to adopt the method, laying down, however, strict rules for a careful enquiry into the cause of death in every case, and taking all due precautions to prevent the destruction of a body which might have met death by foul play.

CHARLES HARDING.

(To be continued).

"God's Open Doors."*

BY THE REV. W. GRIFFITHS, PH.D., B.D.

"There is no more thrilling experience in life than to feel yourself at one of God's open doors. Oh the eagerness of it! When you know yourself there every other interest is insignificant, and all opposition may be dared." So says the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams in the opening sermon of his recent volume. He would have his readers watch for such openings, and enter without demur when they come up to them. He knows how slow the great body of men are to enter, nevertheless he is confident that a door once opened by the Master of Life can never be shut. He has learned by a study of the past that "God's way has always been to bring one or a few up to the door, open it for them, and then use them to persuade their reluctant fellows to enter."

No sooner do the latter enter than they begin to wonder at their unwise attitude and needless hesitation, for they find that by the new door they are ushered into a kingdom which is higher and more glorious than the one which they were so loth to leave. Mr. Williams has looked around, has seen open doors, and has noticed that the multitudes keep back from prejudice, or ignorance, or cowardice. This has made him eager to instruct, direct, and inspire them to move onward and upward, and he will not allow his voice to be regulated by the convention which hangs like a mourning cloth on many pulpits. It is to be hoped that his powerful appeals by voice and pen will touch and move many of those who are inclined to look on the Christian Church as an outgrown institution.

No unprejudiced reader of these sermons will be likely to say that the preacher lacks the courage of his opinions. He is outspoken but reverent. He respects and appreciates the old, but welcomes the new if he perceives that it bears the divine imprint. The admonition which he gives with regard to former thinkers and teachers is not unnecessary. "When a new kingdom arrives we should enter it, not to rail against men who did good in other ways before it came, but to secure the new lever by which we may lift a burden which they could not."

A religious teacher and guide who speaks in such respectful tones may fairly expect respectful attention on the part even of those who dread innovations in religious thought and practice. It is obvious that it is not for the love of change in itself that he yearns for "a simpler faith than any of the creeds offer; a faith nearer to the fountains of life and reality; a faith anchoring itself, not in words and phrases, but in the eternal goodness of God."

He seeks for the spiritual values in formulas and watchwords. The following may serve as an instance. "We often hear the cry, 'Back to Christ.' So far as it means dispensing with a load of historic dogmatics it is good, but on the whole it is a shallow cry. Back to the human Jesus is not the way of salvation for the world. It is not by any mere facts of his life, or death, or resurrection that men are saved. Nor is it by these that the real significance of Jesus himself is understood. You must go deep down into the spirit of Jesus until you find God there, before you can either understand him or feel his saving power."

The volume is certainly stimulating and strengthening. The themes dealt with are attractive and timely, attractive perhaps because they are timely; and the treatment is clear and vivid. May the sermons be widely read, for they emphasize faith in God and goodness, man's divineness and possibilities, the need for enlargement of the mental vision and deepening of the spiritual life, and the growing desire for a wider, deeper, and more vital Church.

* "God s Open Doors," by the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams. London: A. & C. Black. 6d. net.

HIGHGATE HILL.

Our London Churches.

1.—HIGHGATE HILL.

Highgate Hill Church and its twin sister institution, the Channing House High School for Girls, were founded in 1885 by the joint efforts of the Misses Emily and Matilda Sharpe and the late Rev. Robert Spears. Aided by many generous friends, and under the fostering care of the London District Unitarian Society, the church grew, till in 1895 it was enabled to throw off its leading strings and to take an independent position among the London churches. As pastor of this church, Mr. Spears ever strove to associate with its services institutions of public beneficence, and, amongst other efforts, in 1890 founded, in a very small, tentative way, a free lending library of general literature, at the same time throwing open the schoolroom on four nights of each week as a public reading room, well supplied with newspapers, magazines, and books. The success that from the outset attended these two experiments, though gratifying to their promoters, had necessarily the effect of restricting the use to which the rooms could otherwise have been devoted, particularly in carrying on institutions more generally associated with church activities. Thus the demand for further accommodation may be said to have arisen as far back as 1890. Mr. Spears early realised this, and had plans drawn out for extending the premises over the vacant ground at his disposal. Circumstances, however, prevented him at the time from carrying out the project in its entirety, and his lamented death in 1899 left the work only partially completed. Now, however, with the opening of a new chapter in the church history, it was felt to be singularly appropriate to complete the work, dedicating it as a most fitting memorial to the devoted zeal of its initiator, and the new buildings are the fulfilment of that idea. They have cost £2253 4s. 11d. Towards this amount the congregation has contributed £797 2s. 3d., whilst £464 8s. has been received from sympathising friends.

The School House was opened on the 20th September, 1885, when the Rev. Henry Ierson preached the sermon.

The Chapel was opened on the 1st May, 1890, the preacher being Dr. Sadler.

The present minister is the Rev. H. R. Greaves.

The Provincial Assembly of London and the South-Eastern Counties recently held its 15th annual meeting in the newly-enlarged buildings. The sermon preached on the occasion has been published.*

Wordsworth writes of the delights of the boy in Nature—

"For never will come back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, and glory in the flower!"

But I have just seen a man, well knowing what he spoke of, who told me that the verse was not true for him; that his eyes opened as he grew older, and that every spring was more beautiful to him than the last.

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* *The Hope that is Set Before Us.* By the Rev. I. I. Martin. To be had from the Rev. F. Allen, 5, Holland Grove, London, S.W.

Thoughts from Germany.

II.

In my last paper I expressed the belief that no nation had so much to learn from the English as the Germans, and *vice versa*, no nation had so much to learn from the Germans as the English; and I proceeded to mention some of the lessons that I thought our kinsmen on the Continent had to teach us. I wish to continue the subject, and to point out how, in further ways, we might be indebted to Germany; but lest I should be thought to be holding a brief for the foreign country, and to be blind to the good qualities of my own, I want to specify, first of all, some of the lessons I think we might teach the Germans.

Firstly, it appears to me, we take the lead easily in matters of *sanitation*. We are, indeed, very far from perfect, but we have, at any rate, a sense of the importance of drainage, of fresh water and plenty of it, of baths and wash-houses, which is less developed in the Fatherland. We by no means feel yet that an Englishman should be ashamed not to be able to swim; but I should think that a much larger proportion of Englishmen can swim than of Germans. Next, though again we ourselves are only just waking up to the subject, we recognise far more than they do the value of ventilation, fresh air, and open-air games and exercises. I am astonished that a people so essentially scientific as they are should be so timid about open doors and windows. It may be due in part to a false sense of economy. Coal and fuel are dear, and warmth is, therefore, a more valuable asset than with us. Their distaste for sports perhaps has to do with the same thriftiness. They are, as a whole, too busy to play, and when they have recreation it is not of that athletic open-air kind so much in evidence among us. They are excellent in fencing; but this is chiefly in-doors. Skating, for which their climate favours them, is the one open-air recreation in which they may be said to take the lead. We, of course, go to the opposite extreme. We play too much; we are tempted to regard everything, even war, as a game. We might, however, teach the Germans to play more. We believe too deeply, the Germans insufficiently, in the old proverb that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Thirdly, I fancy that we are more good-natured than the Germans. I remember as a youth being struck and rather appalled by the sternness, almost fierceness sometimes of the German character. They take life and work very seriously. There is a want of ease and restfulness in their life. They are exerting themselves strongly and strenuously. Far more than the English they are putting forth their strength. We rarely do what we can. Now and again in our history we have been in dead earnest, as in Cromwell's campaign, and the great Reform Bill, and in the old days of the wars of King Alfred; and then we have been a sight for the world. But as a rule we are an easy-going, neglectful people, putting up with wrongs we should not tolerate and allowing evils we should not permit. The present condition of England is in many ways a disgrace and a scandal—which we can put right, and ought to put right, and *must* put right if we are not to suffer perhaps irretrievable disasters. Yet, when all is said, the Englishman's good nature—his kindliness and patience—distinguish him all over the earth, and however culpable in some of its aspects, it is most admirable in others, the mark at least of noble *abilities*. Lastly, I think the Englishman generally is by nature quicker, less matter-of-fact, and more imaginative, if less practical, than the German. We have, after all, more faith in *ideas* than he has. Germany is what she is largely through the necessities of her situation and history. There has been less scope for theory and experiment than among the French and ourselves. She is shut in by powerful and traditional foes, in perpetual danger, with little opportunity for new policies, guided always by the exigencies of the moment. France and England, with their great seaboard, their colonies and their freedom, have been the homes of imperial and cosmopolitan ideals. France gave the world the great watchword "Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood." England has nourished a steady, progressive, and hitherto irresistible Liberalism. But Germany has retained a powerful element of *Absolutism* in her constitution, and has glorified the doctrine of an enlightened use of Physical Force. Hence the complaint made by Freeman of the German historian, Mommsen—"the greatest scholar of our times, well-nigh the greatest scholar of all

times," as he acknowledges him to be,—that he vitiates his conclusions by under-estimate of the power in politics of moral principles.

Now Absolutism has not served the Fatherland badly. Englishmen sometimes ask with astonishment how it is that an educated people like the Germans can submit to the dictation of the Kaiser. Well, they submit to it because, on the whole, it has been of great service. It is extremely questionable whether the slow procedure of our Parliamentary freedom could have united the German states and built up their present powerful Empire. A wise Absolutism—immense arbitrary power in the hands of wise monarchs and statesmen—has crushed opposition, swept away abuses, established institutions, and in an astonishingly short period of time raised Germany to the forefront in the affairs of the world. Whether this Absolutism will continue is another matter. I think it is very doubtful. Militarism, which was the mainspring, in the beginning, of the greatness of Germany, and is still the centre of her national life, is not, I believe, an essentially permanent feature. I can imagine the German States standing stronger and more closely knit together, when the corporate feeling of *the good of all* has replaced the old *fear of destruction from without.* The drastic authority arbitrarily exercised by Bismarck has only to be constitutionally developed to make Germany the first great Socialistic Commonwealth.

English visitors to Germany are invariably struck by her officialism,—which seems to them agreeable or disagreeable by the manner in which it affects them. On the railway, for instance, the guards, porters, engine-drivers, and the rest look like soldiers. Their uniforms and square shoulders, and commanding address, give the impression of authority. We possibly call them fussy. If we are well-to-do we are surprised at being ordered about. We look for deference and we do not get it. On the other hand, if we are poor, we may be astonished at the attention we get. These officials, who represent the *State* and not a private company, are performing state-functions. They will not be "tipped" nor bribed, and they will stand no nonsense. The engines and rolling-stock seem, indeed, clumsy after ours, but the railways are splendidly managed. There is very little unpunctuality, and small risk of accidents. Compared with England this risk is as 1 to 4—that is, *there are four times as many railway accidents in this country as in Germany.* Everywhere the traveller will notice the same rather fussy but efficient management. At the stations the refreshment-rooms are not mere drinking-bars, but places where you may procure simple refreshment of all kinds at a very moderate rate. The caterer even, to an extent, is a *State servant*—he serves the public, and is not a mere private contractor. At the level-crossings, as the train passes, the man in charge has to appear by the closed barrier, and to salute the guard as a notification that he is at his post. Looking out on the fields we see the peasants busy with their oxen, at the plough or in the traces. We notice other signs of primitive culture. But the spade-labour is excellent, and every yard of land is tilled. We miss the hedges; but no fence or wall is needed on the farms or in the gardens. The respect for property is sacred. The peasants are both cultivators and landlords, and there is no feeling of class wrong or enmity. Small stone landmarks are sufficient boundaries, and in the village every man's fruit tree is safe—even if it be a vine on the house-front in the street: nobody will touch it. The first lesson a boy or girl learns, or rather inherits, and feels in his peasant blood, is to respect the fruit of his neighbour's labour. We notice also how well these peasants hold themselves, in spite of their hard toil. They have served their three years in the army, and are liable at any moment to be called out for service. One wishes almost that there was an army for the women,—whose severe, far too severe, though healthy work, makes them early crooked. If we pass through a mining district we observe there, also, how well the men walk. They do not slouch and roll about with that weary, careless look we are accustomed to. They have served in the army, and something of the order and discipline and self-control of the army goes with them into their daily labour. Every collier has been, and still is, in a sense, a servant of the State.

As you know, the German army is not in the main a mercenary or a voluntary, but a *civil* force. I mean by that that though it consists, to a considerable extent, of men who have

chosen it as their profession, it is chiefly made up of the citizens themselves, who serve one, two, or three years, according to their qualifications and efficiency. Every able-bodied man, who is a native and of German parentage, rich or poor, must learn to bear arms and be ready, if called upon, to fight for his country. Englishmen are naturally impressed by the German military schools. The parade-ground, for example, is of the greatest interest. You see there men of all ranks under discipline—being taught to march, to run, to leap and assault, to defend and attack, with staff or sword or rifle, and undergo various healthy and fatiguing exercises nearly all day long; and it is no uncommon thing for them to be called up in the middle of the night to proceed to a neighbouring height or village. And it is a serious affair. There is no playing at soldiering. Insubordination of any kind is an offence to the State, and is most severely, we might think sometimes brutally, punished. It must be confessed that there is an element of Absolutism in the German army that is inconsistent with a genuine civic force, but all things considered, under present conditions, I know of no healthier, manlier system for the training of youth. Every young man is thereby taught to develop his body and his muscles, to endure hardship, to undergo fatigue, to obey, to do his duty, to be punctual, to be prompt, to be orderly, to be master of his appetites and desires, to be methodical, thrifty, industrious, alert, reliable; and the effects of this instruction is obvious on the whole manhood of the nation, and particularly on that of the lower, middle, and artisan classes.

But this military training is only part of a much more extensive system of education. The public schools and universities are interconnected and united in their work. In England, as you know, they are more or less independent and unrelated, and, what is more, exclusive and even antagonistic. There is little or nothing of co-operation among them. The different classes and sects and trades and professions have their particular schools and colleges, and these have very little to do with each other—with the result that some of them are remakably efficient, at least as good as the schools of Germany, while others are deplorably inefficient. In Germany they are unified and systematised, and alike under the strict supervision of the State. Every scholar is a *State* scholar, entitled, in virtue of his mere birth, to a State education. The elementary schools are attended, in the main, by all ranks. The sons of peasants and lawyers, shop-keepers, artisans, and noblemen, sit together at one desk. Later differentiation begins. As they are fitted for it and win prizes and bursaries, or as their parents desire it and can afford it, the scholars pass on, at the age of 12—every boy and girl must be at school until 14—to the secondary or Burger Schools for various periods of general liberal instruction, in continuation of what they have already learned. Certificates from these schools exempt their holders from one or two years' service in the army, and qualify for clerkships in commercial firms. Thence they move on either to the Universities for professional studies, or to the great technical schools for scientific and commercial training. These last are a speciality in Germany. The teachers are not mere bookmen, but successful manufacturers and managers, who are paid large salaries to leave business for the purpose. They give lessons, derived from their own practical experience, in such subjects as printing, engraving, dyeing, engineering, hosiery, bootmaking, carpentering, electricity, or what not, and turn the students, who have already had a good grounding in general culture, into practised workmen. You say what vast schools these must be for such teaching? It is true; they are immense—larger than all our late Board Schools and National Schools put together. I read the following from an article written by a Leicester man: "Close to Chemnitz is the little town of Mittweida, not so large as South Wigston. Here is a technical school of 1600 students. It was founded by a Berlin manufacturer, in order to train foremen, assistants, and managers for his electrical and engineering works. The Government pays four-fifths of the cost, and the fees of only £13 10s. a year per student make the other fifth." Is it surprising that the Germans are beginning to compete with Englishmen?

As I have said, some of our schools are as good as the German. I might say that some

are far better. But the fundamental distinction between the two countries is this—that the working classes and lower middle classes are vastly better trained there than here, that they have opportunities we have not, that as Professor Dewar said in his presidential address the other day to the British Association, "The German population has reached a point of general training and specialised equipment which it will take us two generations of hard and intelligently directed educational work to attain."

How diffused the desire to learn is in Germany is apparent to the visitor who finds himself very soon drawn into conversation by the native anxious to practice his English. If you are not careful you will find that they are learning far more from you than you from them. The eagerness for self-improvement in the country was once brought home to me by a talk I had in the train with a young butcher, who, after learning his trade in his native town, had made his way to Paris, and worked in a French business for a twelvemonth, and then wanted to visit England for further experience. *This* kind of thing is the mark of an educated people.

Other signs are abundant. There is a solidity about the daily newspaper. Working people don't buy it chiefly for cricket or football or racing intelligence. What we are too ready to dismiss as dull and dry finds readers. And the articles are not divided up into paragraphs with tempting and even sensational head-lines to attract attention. The public is more genuinely a *reading* public than ours. Again, there is a much wider-spread pleasure in music and the drama. Almost every institution has its band. There is music in the market-place once or twice a week, and frequently in the principal restaurants and gardens; it accompanies the trade processions; the choir-boys of the town church often sing their hymns and carols in the streets. The theatres are subsidised and supervised by the State, and Shakespeare's plays are more acted than in England. The German working people know far more of Shakespeare than ours do; and they know their Goethe and Schiller besides.

I need not say more. Germany has benefited by her *necessities*. She cannot *afford* to neglect her poor. Perhaps the same blessing is coming to us. It may be that in face of possible military or commercial disaster, we shall discover that we can no longer *afford* to leave our English poor amid sordid surroundings and deadly temptations, beset with sin and incapacitated for taking their rightful place in the battle of life. EDGAR I. FRIPP.

To be Continued.

The Form of Public Worship.

(Continued.)

The principles which have now disclosed themselves, when applied to the ordinary instruments of common worship, suggest an arrangement of parts somewhat as follows :—

Praise and Prayer. Converse. Lesson. [Praise. Lesson.] Praise. Converse. Prayer. Silent Devotion. Prayer of Aspiration and Joy. Praise. Sermon. Psalm of Brotherhood in Holy Purpose. Benediction.

Praise, in this order, means devotional utterance by many voices. Prayer means the utterance by one voice of the devotion of many minds. Converse means the alternate use of one voice and of many in devotional utterance.

It will be seen that the order here set forth is one whose general shape has already been ratified by wide acceptance. It may, perhaps, be taken as a norm, from which particular congregations vary in different ways, and commonly for the worse.

We are now confronted with the still-vexed "liturgical question." There are many congregations whose custom is to prescribe in a printed form every several detail in the oral part of worship, down to the very wording of the prayers. There are others which avoid such detailed prescription wherever they can, and prize the freedom of choice which they thus retain in the conduct of the service. Which of these two methods is right, and which wrong?

The answer here proffered is, that both are right and both wrong. Each is right in its own positive principle, but each wrong in its denial of the principle affirmed by the other. On the fly-leaf of Dr. Hunter's Devotional Services are quoted some words addressed by Bunsen to Thomas Arnold in 1834: "I claim liberty for

extempore prayer, liberty for silent prayer, and liberty for altering the liturgy. As long as the world stands there will be people who prefer a liturgy like yours; others who prefer extempore prayer; others free selections from fixed prayers; but all reasonable men would allow such a form to be best, to be really catholic, which would unite all, assigning to each mode its fittest place."

In support of this decision it is first of all to be observed that the adherents of each method implicitly concede, even when they explicitly deny, the value of the other. Those who employ a liturgy prescribe, over and above the ordinary prayers, certain special prayers for particular seasons and occasions. Unless they are prepared to claim that the authors of the liturgy have foreseen every possible occasion which might call for a special note in devotion, they must admit that, for occasional use, extempore prayer has a proper function in public worship. Moreover, the sermon, which is a devotional exercise, is always extempore in the same sense in which public prayer need ever be so; and it is hard to find a sane rule which will admit into religious exhortation a degree of variety which it refuses to the terms of religious aspiration.

On the other hand, there is no such thing as a perfectly free and open service. Time and place are prescribed, not by necessary rule, but by convention—that is, by the rule of convenience. It is found convenient also to use a hymn book and an organ; in other words, to prescribe a liturgy of praise. Is this merely a necessary evil? Would it be preferred that entirely new hymns should be provided for every service? Or is not the devotional value of the hymnal increased by the familiarity of its words? We are also to take note that many hymns are prayers, not only in essence, but even in form. A hymn book is caught up at random—it happens to be Mr. Hargrove's recension of the Berwick Hymnal—and out of the first thirty hymns there are only three which do not contain a direct address to God. Can any sane rule be framed which shall admit liturgical prayer if couched in jingling verse, but exclude it if worded in the prose of the Authorised Version?

> "Whatever, Lord, we lend to thee,
> Repaid a thousandfold will be;
> Then gladly will we give to thee,
> Who givest all."

On what principle are these words proper, and those which here follow improper, for liturgical use?

"O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same."

Secondly, it is significant that while a congregation which employs a liturgy is generally found to prize and defend it, it is difficult to induce any congregation which has been used to a "free" form of service to adopt a liturgy. Each realises the devotional value of the method which it knows. It follows that those congregations are in best case which, by excluding neither mode, are able to realise the helpfulness of both.

The advantage of reserving a place for extempore prayer derives from the fact that no congregation is a mere abstract parcel of humanity. It consists of particular men and women, assembled in certain numbers, on a particular date; and the power and need of this special complex will differ, in some quality or proportion, from that of any other. The margin of difference may often be slight, but sometimes it is important enough to be felt as an element in the common consciousness. Then, if worship is to be full and sincere, there must be some expression of this element. The only means by which such expression can be supplied is that of extempore prayer.

By far the greater part, however, of the needs and powers of any congregation are not only constant in that society, but common to all worshipping societies, since they are simply human. For these there is never any need to resort to extempore expression. We ought to provide for them the form of words which shall most unite clearness, force, simplicity and beauty.

In all that is here said about a liturgy this ideal is contemplated, and a wise and honest effort to realise it is presumed. A prayer-book which does not express the abiding, the simply human, needs, powers and hopes, or one whose language is harsh, mean, tawdry or slipshod, is an outrage. But since there is now great store of holy thought put into noble speech no compiler need go astray; and if egoism, perversity

or incapacity chooses to pillory itself in a book of devotion, no congregation is bound to adopt that book. Given, then, that we have words which are beautiful and simple, strong and clear, words which enshrine our deepest and most constant thought and feeling, is it not well that we should often have those words before our eyes, often in our ears, often on our lips? Can they become too familiar? By means of such a liturgy we ensure that the service shall always be helpful to all.

One incidental advantage of a liturgy is that it admits of the mode of worship called (in the scheme above) converse. Interspersed with other modes, it serves in a peculiar degree to keep alive the sense of fellowship in unity. In a responsive series of prayers, like the Litany, it opens a way of solemn and fervid aspiration.

Another advantage is that in a liturgy we may give a fixed place to certain forms of praise, as well as of prayer. This is impossible so long as our only service-book is a hymnal. There is no hymn in the language that will stand the strain of liturgical use: the conditions of hymn-writing, the limitations of metre and tune, make such a product impossible. The compilers of the Anglican Prayer Book have inserted only one hymn, and that in two services of specially rare occurrence—the Ordination of Priests and Consecration of Bishops. But the *Venite* is sung every day (save one) in the year, and when does it begin to wear thin? The type of poetry to which the Canticles belong is much nobler, and has been moulded by a grander tradition, than that of the modern hymn. Only the best of verse or prose can endure the test of constant use: but certain of the Hebrew Psalms, in the Authorised Version, or that of the Prayer Book, must be reckoned among the best. It is somewhat strange that writers of praise do no more often attempt this loftier manner, rather than produce another C.M. or 6.6.6.6.8.8. jingle. The Canticles which Dr. Martineau wrote for the Ninth and Tenth Services are worthy of their place amid those beautiful prayers. A greater reliance upon material of that kind would relieve the hymnal of a strain which it is not able to bear, and would so exalt the dignity and impressiveness of the service.

E. W. Lummis.

To be Continued.

Notes and Jottings.

The death of Herbert Spencer leaves a gap that cannot be filled. He was an old man and seemed already to belong to a past generation. Much of his thought has been absorbed into the ordinary intellectual atmosphere. He wrote of evolution before Darwin, and taught us to speak of the "Struggle for existence" and the "Survival of the fittest." In its massiveness and range his intellectual achievement has been compared to that of Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas. There are not wanting signs that his agnosticism is no final resting place even for minds that were once eager to accept it. Certainly he has not spoken the final, perhaps not even an enduring, word upon the spiritual facts of life. But he has accomplished something which is only possible to the greatest leaders of thought. We must go back to the days before evolution to see the distance which we have travelled in every sphere of intellectual activity. It has been a change more radical and destined to have more far-reaching results than the Reformation itself, and we owe it to Herbert Spencer even more than to Darwin.

We are glad to see that what may be called an official Nonconformist programme on the Education Question has been issued. We hope that it marks the abandonment of the attitude of mere criticism and resistance, however needful this may have been, in the interest of constructive effort. Of course the scheme binds no one but the Education Committee of the National Free Church Council, and we do not know that it has any special mandate to speak in the name of the whole of English Nonconformity. It is, moreover, rather overweighted with clerical names. We have, more than once, expressed our conviction that this question must be transferred from the platform of the churches to that of the State. As a rule the militant Nonconformist minister suffers from the same objection as the Anglican in the view of the average citizen. They both represent the clerical element, with its professional prejudices and its unfortunate leaning towards the bitter side of controversy. Many of the suggestions are in themselves admirable and such as any impartial

citizen's committee, with a single eye to educational efficiency, would be likely to adopt. It is on the question of religious instruction that we see rocks ahead. Section 6 simply extends to all public schools what is known as the Board School system. There is to be Bible teaching in accordance with a syllabus, subject of course to a conscience clause. It must be remembered that this is put forward not as an ideal but as a practical policy under present circumstances, and however much we may like it personally it strikes us as lacking in clear perception of the facts of the situation. It is evident that those who control the Roman Catholic and the Anglican schools will accept no arrangement on these lines, and we are far more likely to get universal secular instruction, with separate religious teaching, untrammelled by the lowest common terms of an Education Committee,

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An important step has been taken by the Court of the University of Manchester in adopting a generous scheme for theological teaching and degrees. The degrees are to be given simply on the basis of knowledge without tests of opinion, and though the University will recognise some of the Denominational Colleges for teaching purposes, it is proposed to establish University Chairs of Biblical Exegesis and Comparative Religion. This, of course, amounts to the founding of a faculty on precisely the lines which Manchester College has advocated for more than a century.

It is remarkable, and most significant, to find that a momentous step of this kind has been taken with the practically unanimous assent of a large and representative body, with the blessing of the Bishop and Dean of Manchester, Dr. Maclaren, and a number of laymen of very various shades of opinion. It must surely be the beginning of the end of the close Theological Faculties at Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin, which every year become a more glaring anachronism.

The publishers are always busy at this time of the year. With the one magnificent exception of "Morley's Gladstone" the autumn season has not brought us many books of mark. There are endless books in the market, dainty reprints galore, but little that is stimulating or original. Perhaps some readers will be glad to learn that Messrs. Williams and Norgate have just published a translation of Professor Jean Reville's lectures on Liberal Religion. In "The Psalms in Human Life" Mr. Rowland E. Prothero has given us a pleasant literary study on a subject that can never lose its freshness. For more ambitious readers there is Mr. Cook's elucidation of the Code of Hammurabi, the collection of Babylonian Law, discovered the year before last, which goes back probably to about the year 2300 B.C., and is full of interest for the reader of the Old Testament.

Guild News.

Under the title of "Our Guild," a most interesting Society for Young People is conducted by our friends at Chowbent. This Guild may be congratulated upon the fact of its being one of the largest, in point of numbers, of the various Societies forming the Guilds' Union. The membership numbers about 140, and the Guild meets fortnightly on alternate Mondays. A devotional service is held, and is followed by papers by members on religious, literary, and social subjects, followed by discussion or appropriate quotations. Members promote Lantern Lectures, provide flowers for the chapel, visit the sick, distribute literature, etc. And under its auspices the Band of Hope, Reading Room, Library, and Singing Class are conducted. The committee of this Guild does not draw up a definite programme of subjects. The chief event of the Winter Session has been a united gathering of the Chowbent, Leigh, and Swinton Guilds, together with friends from Astly, Hindly, and Bolton, where they have no Guild. There was a large attendance. Tea was served at five o'clock. The meeting which followed took the form of a conference, and was of an interesting and helpful character. The Rev. J. J. Wright presided, and addresses were given by the Rev. W. E. George, M.A., and Mr. Richard Robinson, of Swinton, and the Rev. R. S. Redfern and Mr. J. Ridyard, of Leigh. It was unanimously agreed to recommend the formation of a District Union. The very successful meeting concluded with a dance. The hope was expressed that this might not be the last of such united gatherings, which do so much to promote good fellowship and a better knowledge of each other among those in the district.

I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the *reasonableness* of God's work. — JOHN FISKE.

News from the Field.

When these lines meet the eyes of our readers we shall have started in the New Year; our faces are now turned towards the future with hope and confidence. But before we leave the Old Year altogether we ought to ask whether, in our survey of the "Field," we have any reason for thankfulness? If our readers will turn back and read what these columns have recorded they will see, amid many changes, real and substantial signs of growing zeal and devotion throughout our Churches. We are not a great multitude, but the breezes of God are blowing among us, and a more active life is being called forth in every direction. We may be full of thankfulness and go forward with new hope and courage.

Among our ministers there still are changes going on. These are inevitable. We hear of the resignation of two of our veterans, the *Rev. E. Allen*, of *Walmsley*, who deems it time to take in sail and anchor in calm waters, and the *Rev. Peter Dean*, of *Loughborough*, who has to stand aside because of failing health. Our warm sympathies are with him. The *Rev. L. T. Badcock* has also resigned his charge at *Shepton Mallet*.

Derby has secured a new minister in the person of the *Rev. E. L. Buckland*; *Oldbury* is rejoicing, as many do throughout the kingdom, in the return to active duty of the *Rev. Henry McKean* after his long illness; and *Cardiff* has welcomed the *Rev. W. Whitaker*; and the *Church of the Messiah, Birmingham*, has greeted the *Rev. J. W. Austin* on the commencement of his ministry. To all these workers for righteousness we extend our cordial greetings.

We observe with pleasure that the *N.E. Lancashire Association* is following the lead of *Manchester* and visiting the churches in its district. A beginning has been made at *Leigh*, and it is to be followed up by visits to all the churches. We should like to see this excellent plan in operation throughout the country.

A new iron church has been opened at *Garston*, near *Liverpool*, and kind friends have taken care that it is opened free of debt.

Wolverhampton is struggling to free itself from debt, as its work and success grow, and *Whitchurch* has renewed its youth, and put on a brighter appearance to face the New Year.

Bazaars have still been in vogue. The *Yorkshire Union* has raised more than £4000; *Park Lane* rejoices in the receipt of £700; *Padiham* has £136; *Forestgate* has £50; *Horwich* £156; *Highgate* £160; *Stockton* £85; and *Newcastle* over £200. Evidently these bazaars are gold mines.

The *British and Foreign Association* has made its annual appeal to the churches for collections, and already about 200 have responded. The amounts given have not been large, but they indicate a general goodwill towards this active missionary organisation.

The popular services held in *London, Greenwich, Manchester*, and *Devonport*, are now over. On the whole they have been splendidly successful. The subjects dealt with have been interesting, the preachers have been attractive, the music has been excellent, and the audiences have varied from 200 to 1400 persons. The effort was well worth making, and a similar effort should be made in the early months of the present year.

There was a very pleasing feature in connection with "Mayor's Sunday" this year. In four places, at least, the Mayor and Corporation went in state to our Free Churches—*Glossop, Lewes, Kidderminster* and *Boston*. There may have been other places too, but the news has not reached us.

G. J. Holyoake occupied the pulpit at *Rochdale* one Sunday last month. The old Reformer has many ties which bind him to *Rochdale* and to our friends there, but we should think he and they felt a little strange as they looked into each other's faces in the *Rochdale* Church.

Several of our associations have met during the past month. The *London District* and the *Band of Hope Union* met in *Essex Hall*, the *Bolton District S.S. Union* met at *Halliwell Road*, and the *S. Cheshire Association* met at *Knutsford*. All the meetings were encouraging, and those who met were in good heart and hope.

Our temperance friends in *London* sent out an appeal that *Sunday, November 29th*, should be observed as Temperance Sunday. They had a good many responses, but not so many, perhaps, as they expected. Some of our churches had already, and frequently, dealt with the subject during the year, while others had observed a different date. These special days appointed by different bodies are apt to clash, and it may be that too many of such appeals are made. Temperance is part and parcel of religion and is of growing acceptance among us.

It is a great pleasure to hear from *Brother Hocart*, of *Brussels*, that the protracted litigation in which his little church has been engaged, is now happily over, and that he and his people are substantial gainers. All his English friends will rejoice with him. Having gained so much, however, he very naturally wants more. He wants a better building and more generous support. Our good wishes are with him.

Again, ere we close this survey of our field, we have to note the loss we have sustained in the departure from among us of good men and women. Among these are *J. C. Thompson*, of *Liverpool*, *Mrs. Groom*, of *Whitchurch*, *Sir J. R. Robinson*, of *London*, *Humphrey Nash*, of *Horsham*, *Joseph Jenkins*, of *Aberdare*, *J. M. Bentley*, of *Bolton*, *A. W. Wills, J.P.*, of *Birmingham*, and *Blakeley Orr*, of *Comber*. A sheaf of noble souls gathered in God's great harvest.

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